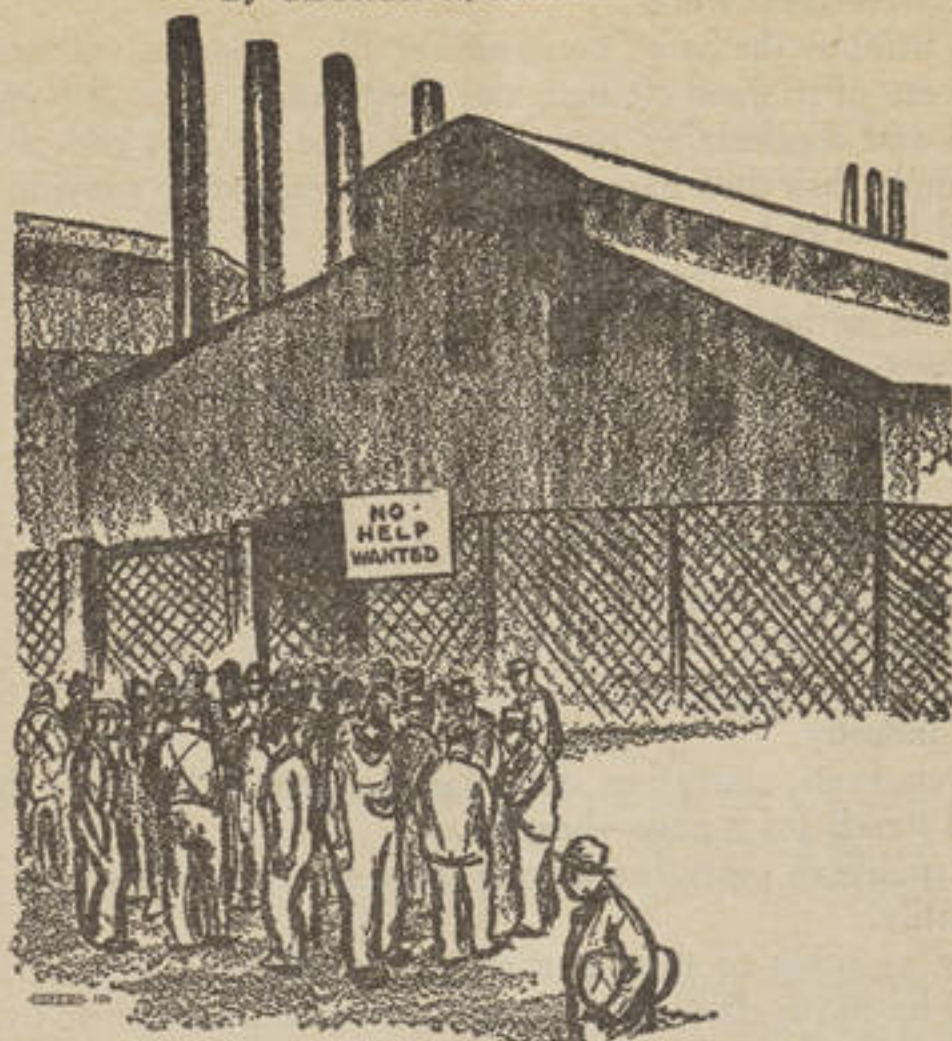


Out of Work

By GEORGE R. KIRKPATRICK



Crops Rot, Machines Lie Idle— Why Must Humans Suffer Want?

More than ten million people now (1932) walk the streets and highways looking for work. At least another ten million are forced to submit to part-time employment. They are willing to help produce plenty for all, but they are not permitted to do so.

Think of it! Want and the grim fear of want haunting the multitudes of the working class, now, when tools and machinery of production are well-nigh perfect, now, when scientific knowledge for our use in production surpasses the most brilliant hopes of the sages of the past.

Think of the brutal meanness of want and the fear of want hounding the lives of millions, while crops are allowed to rot—and in some cases deliberately destroyed—and while the government itself advocates that those who furnish our raw materials limit their production to "improve the market."

Think also of our four million farmers in distress, while tens of millions of wage-earners in mills, mines and factories are kept too poor to buy what the farmers produce.

You see, it would be unprofitable for the owners to permit the workers to produce more goods than will supply the market—the profit restricted market. Therefore the workers are “given” jobs—are permitted to work, not as much as they are willing to work, but only so long as it is profitable for the employers to have them work.

Wages will buy the bare “necessities of life.” Wages will not buy good food and plenty of it, good clothing and plenty of it, or good homes that are well located and comfortably furnished. So the workers can produce only enough to supply their own bare necessities, plus enough to provide necessities, comforts and luxuries for the owners.

More than this is regarded as “overproduction.” Over-production? Nonsense! An advance of only \$1.12 a day for our 45 million wage-earners—this alone—would increase our home market 50 million dollars a day, or 15 billion dollars a year, more than \$1,225 extra business for 40,000 merchants.

Old Parties Will Not Help

That's settled, and that puts the whole matter up to the workers. The capitalist class legalizes and thus holds on to this system through the control of the government, and the control of the government is seized and held by the capitalist class by means of political parties—parties committed to the capitalist system of industry.

The Democratic party has stood for this system for more than a long lifetime, and stands for it now—heartily.

The Republican party has always stood for this system, and stands for it now—heartily.

So long as either of these parties is in control of the government, the workers will be neatly fleeced and quietly despised, and their lives will be filled with the grim fear of want.

The workers cannot defend themselves, they cannot escape, until they have a political party for themselves, by themselves—a party composed of the millions who toil on the farms and down in the mines, on the railways, in the offices, shops, mills and factories—a party including also those who are unemployed.

The Socialist Goal

The workers have an overwhelming majority of the ballots, if they will use them. With their own party they can legally seize the powers of government and do whatever is necessary to give the workers free access to the means of production, and then to govern industry for service instead of for profits.

Here is what is necessary to that end:

First, make the socially useable means of production public property;

Second, democratically manage these means of production;

Third, adopt a new industrial policy and purpose of production, namely, not for the profits of a ruling minority class, but for the use of all who are willing to work;

Fourth, adopt the revolutionary doctrine, “If he will not work, neither shall he eat.”

Demand Work—Get Bullets

No matter how hungry and ragged and shelterless you are, no matter how desperate your wife may be for the wage you are willing to earn, no matter how sorely your little children cry for food and clothing, no matter how many years of schooling your children miss because of your lack of income, no matter how decent or wholesome or religious you are, no matter how thin you have worn your old shoes tramping sore of foot looking for work—no matter even if your body is piteously scarred from your patriotic efforts to defend your country—still you have no right to a job.

You will promptly be up against the police, militia and even the standing army if you invade the factory and proceed to produce without permission, foolishly thinking that you have a right to work. It is perfectly legal to have you jailed or gassed or shot if you proudly and boldly demand work. In Illinois, for example, the Socialist party has uncovered instructions to the militia for "handling emergency disturbances" which tell the state soldiers to use sulphur bombs, gas, direct rifle fire and machine guns to quell any "radical" demonstration. Dozens have been killed and hundreds injured in unemployment demonstrations, within the last few months.

Why Men Are Jobless

Now let us study the A B C of unemployment:

Part of the people own as private property the nation's industrial outfit, the forests, mines, mills, factories and railways. By owning this property, they are held also to own the right to give or withhold the jobs connected with these forms of property.

In other words, under the wage-and-profit system of industry, society is now managed for the special benefit of the people who own our industrial equipment. These people take their incomes in the form of profits—rent and interest are different names for profits.

Now, in order that there may be profits, two conditions are absolutely necessary:

First, the workers must be paid less than the value of the goods they produce;

Second, there must be a market in which to sell the goods.

Profits Limit Market

The market consists of two parts, the consuming power of the owning class and the purchasing power of the working class. For a large part of the owners consumption is limited only by their desire for plenty of the good things of life, but even then they can hardly begin to use the fruits of modern scientific production. As for the workers, their consumption is strictly limited by wages. A worker with a chuck steak wage is no part of the market for porterhouse.

Since there are tens of millions of wage-earners, we can see that the profit system places a great restriction on the market. With modern machinery and tools and knowledge these tens of millions of workers could produce abundantly for all, but they are not permitted to do so.

Why We Must Rebuild

Now just a moment while we set down five fundamental propositions about work and social reconstruction:

First Proposition: Everybody ought to work.

Second Proposition: If everybody ought to work, everybody should be permitted to work.

Third Proposition: If everybody ought to work then it is unfair and dangerous to permit a generation of the children of the industrial ruling class to grow up guaranteed against work by the inheritance of wealth they never earned.

Fourth Proposition: Any society that teaches that everybody ought to work, and then on the one hand permits hundreds of thousands to escape work for the present and into the far future—while on the other hand it robs those who do work, and denies millions of workers the privilege of work, and abuses them when they have no work—any such society is insincere in purpose and unjust in practice.

Fifth Proposition: Any society insincere in purpose and unjust in practice, reeking with injustice which is mockingly protected by constitutions and statutes, by the courts, police, militia and army—for those who live by owning against those who live by producing—any such society should be reconstructed.

Forward to Socialism!

"Regulation" is not enough. "Trust-busting" is not enough. "Social planning"—by and for the capitalists—is not enough. "Honest money" is not enough. Do not let yourselves be fooled by those who advocate salve treatments for our social leprosy. Fifty years of "liberal" and "progressive" surface reforms have brought us to the condition in which we find ourselves today—a few minor evils have been corrected, but the basic injustice of capitalism has grown worse.

Only the Socialist party advocates the orderly reconstruction of industrial society to bring a full glad life to all. It is the workers' party in America, and it invites all workers to join its struggles to build an industrial democracy—the cooperative commonwealth.

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